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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/360,199	07/23/1999	JACK GAULDIE	GDI-1	3800

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EXAMINER
SCHNIZER, RICHARD A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
1635	

DATE MAILED: 03/15/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/360,199	Applicant(s) GAULDIE ET AL.	
	Examiner Richard Schnizer	Art Unit 1635	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____ .

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) 1-28 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) 1-28 is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11)☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a)☐ approved b)☐ disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____ .

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☒ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ .
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: .

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Prosecution Application

The request filed on 7/31/01 for a Continued Prosecution Application (CPA) under 37 CFR 1.53(d) based on parent Application No. 09/360,199 is acceptable and a CPA has been established. An action on the CPA follows.

Claims 1-28 are pending and under consideration in this Office Action. After further consideration, the requirement for election of species set forth in Paper No. 3 is withdrawn.

Claim Objections

Claim 13 is objected to because it is ungrammatical. The article "a", immediately preceding the word "alcohol", should be changed to "an".

Claim 19 is objected to because it lacks an article preceding the noun "tumor antigen". Insertion of the word "a" is suggested.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

> The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 1-19 and 26-28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, because the specification, while being enabling for methods and compositions for delivering a nucleic acid to gastrointestinal or genitourinary cells, wherein an immune response is induced against an antigen encoded and expressed by the nucleic acid, does not reasonably provide enablement for methods or compositions for treatment or prevention of diseases or disorders by delivery of nucleic acids to gastrointestinal or genitourinary cells. The specification does not enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to use the invention commensurate in scope with these claims, for the reasons of record in Paper Nos. 3 and 7, and those discussed below.

Claims 1-19 embrace methods of delivering a "pharmaceutical composition" to gastrointestinal or genitourinary cells in a recipient in need thereof. The pharmaceutical composition must comprise a nucleic acid, or a cell comprising a nucleic acid, the expression of which is desired in the recipient. The method must result in an immune response specific to a gene product encoded by the nucleic acid. For the purpose of examination under 35 USC 112, first paragraph, a "pharmaceutical composition" must be considered one which provides a therapeutic effect when delivered. Claim 3 requires that the pharmaceutical composition must comprise a nucleic acid encoding either (i) an antisense RNA for suppression of expression of a target gene in gastrointestinal cells, or (ii) a peptide or protein which is desired to be expressed in gastrointestinal cells. The specification teaches that antisense RNAs and polypeptides can be expressed in gastrointestinal cells for the purpose of gene therapy in general. See e.g. paragraph

bridging pages 13 and 14. Thus the narrowest scope of these claims encompasses a method of therapy by induction of an immune response to a gene product encoded by a delivered nucleic acid. The broadest scope embraces methods of therapy for any disease or disorder by (i) induction of an immune response by delivery of a nucleic acid encoding a gene product, together with (ii) expression of a therapeutic polypeptide or antisense mRNA.

Claim 26 embraces a suppository comprising a biologically active nucleic acid, wherein the suppository induces an immune response in a recipient. Because the specification recites no purpose for inducing an immune response *in vivo* other than therapy, enablement of this composition will be considered in light of whether or not the specification teaches how to use it for therapeutic purposes.

Claims 27 and 28 embrace methods of preventing pathologic conditions by delivery of biologically active nucleic acids to intestinal tissue. Claim 28 embraces the prevention of any pathologic condition by delivery of any nucleic acid. The scope of claim 27 is limited to preventing or treating cancer, sexually transmitted diseases or inflammatory bowel disease by delivery of any biologically active nucleic acid.

Methods were known in the art prior to the filing date of the instant Application for employing mucolytic agents for the delivery of nucleic acids to gastrointestinal cells. For example, Henning et al prior art taught methods of delivering nucleic acids to intestinal cells, wherein the intestinal tissue was treated with a mucolytic agent. See e.g. WO/93/19660; US Patent 5,786,340, particularly claims 24 and 25; and US Patent 5,821,235, particularly claims 24

and 25. However, as discussed below, administration of nucleic acids to gastrointestinal and genitourinary tracts for treatment or prevention of the disease was highly unpredictable at the time of filing.

At the time the invention was made, successful implementation of gene therapy protocols was not routinely obtainable by those skilled in the art. This is reflected by three recently published reviews. Orkin (Report and Recommendations of the Panel to Assess the NIH Investment in Research on Gene Therapy, 1995) teaches that "significant problems remain in all basic aspects of gene therapy. Major difficulties at the basic level include shortcomings in all current transfer vectors and an inadequate understanding of the biological interaction of these vectors with the host" (page 1, item 3). Orkin teaches that problems exist in delivering nucleic acid sequences to the appropriate target cell or tissue and achieving the appropriate level of expression within that cell or tissue (page 9). Verma et al (Nature 389: 239-242, 1997) teach that "there is still no single outcome that we can point to as a success story (p. 239, col 1). The authors state further, "Thus far, the problem has been the inability to deliver genes efficiently and to obtain sustained expression" (p.239, col. 3). Anderson (Nature 392:25-30, 1998) confirms the unpredictable state of the art, stating that "there is still no conclusive evidence that a gene-therapy protocol has been successful in the treatment of human disease" (p. 25, col. 1) and concluding, "Several major deficiencies still exist including poor delivery systems, both viral and non-viral, and poor gene expression after genes are delivered" (p.30). With respect to antisense therapies, the state of the art is set forth by Crook (In Basic Principles of Antisense Therapeutics,

Springer-Verlag, Eds, New York, pgs. 1 and 4), who teaches that although antisense techniques have progressed rapidly, "the technology remains in its infancy", and the utility of the approach is still debatable (pg. 1, Introduction). Crook points out several factors which may influence the biological effect of antisense, the rate of distribution within the target cell, stability within the target cell, local concentration of the antisense, and the concentration and stability of the target mRNA (pgs. 1 and 4). Furthermore, Branch (Trends in Biochem Sci 23: 45-50, 1998) teaches that selection of appropriate antisense sequences is difficult because secondary structures of mRNAs *in vivo* frequently restrict access of antisense oligonucleotides to the target sequence (page 45, col. 3. first para., page 48, last para. and page 49). Branch states, "Since accessibility cannot be predicted, rational design of antisense molecules is not possible" (page 49, col. 2, last para.). In addition, the specification acknowledges that, at the time the invention was filed, there were no examples of therapeutic benefit from gene transfer to the intestine. This is apparently due to inadequate delivery systems. See page 1, line 25 to page 2, line 18. In summary, at the time the invention was filed, the arts of sense and antisense gene therapy were highly unpredictable, without a single example of success in humans despite numerous attempts.

Chattergoon et al (FASEB J. 11: 753-763, 1997) set forth the state of the art of inducing therapeutic or preventative immune responses by delivery of antigen encoding nucleic acids. Although immune responses to several different antigens have been induced by delivery of naked DNA by intramuscular, intravenous, and intradermal administration routes, very few protective or therapeutic responses have been achieved relative to the unlimited scope embraced by the

instant claims. Rather, the results generally indicated that, at the time of the invention, the field of genetic immunization was immature although promising. For example, Chattergoon teaches that "DNA vaccines show promise for prophylactic immunization" for hepatitis virus (page 759, column 2, last sentence of first full paragraph), and results have provided "encouragement that DNA vaccines may be useful in meeting challenges inherent in developing malarial vaccines" (page 759, last sentence of second paragraph). With respect to tuberculosis, Chattergoon teaches that a single result of a protective immune response in a mouse challenge model indicates that "immunization with plasmid DNA-encoding mycobacterium antigen(or antigens) may provide a simple and efficient method for generating protective immunity." With respect to virus-induced cancers, Chattergoon teaches that "DNA immunization may prove useful in inducing protective immune responses prior to viral exposure." On the other hand, Irvine et al (J. Immunol. 156(1): 238-245, 1996) teach that "DNA immunization alone had little or no impact on the growth of established lung metastases", and that the delivery of cytokines in combination with the vaccine was required for protective effect. The specification does not account for any such modification of treatment. Thus the state of the art at the time of the invention was one of tentative optimism based on scattered successes, and did not support broad claims embracing therapeutic and protective immunization against any and all diseases and disorders.

Various embodiments of claims 5 and 19 require that the antigenic protein encoded by the nucleic acid must be a cytokine, a growth factor, a marker gene product, a receptor, or a receptor agonist. The specification fails to provide any support for the notion that a therapeutic immune

response can be induced against any of these proteins. Further, the prior art of record provides no reason to suspect that an immune response directed against any cytokine, growth factor, marker gene product, receptor, receptor agonist, or structural protein could be therapeutic in any way.

The specification discloses no working example of gene therapy or genetic immunization. The specification discloses one working example which shows that the claimed method can be used to stimulate cytotoxic T cells. Recombinant adenovirus encoding Pym T antigen was administered to mice intrarectally. Lymphocytes were harvested five days later, and shown to lyse specifically cells expressing Pym T antigen in vitro. While this example demonstrates that lymphocytes can be activated against antigens in vivo, but it does not demonstrate that the amount of activation is therapeutically relevant. The prior teaches that the results of CTL assays alone are insufficient to allow one to accurately predict the therapeutic effect of a given vaccine. In fact, it is well established in the art that in vitro assays of CTL activity cannot be considered to have relevance in vivo in the absence of confirmatory in vivo tests. For example, Lancki et al (1992) teaches that it is uncertain as to how CTL lysis of target cells in vitro "relates to the capacity of CTL to lyse such target cells in vivo", and notes that "[t]he role in vivo of such cytotoxic activity has not been determined." See abstract, and paragraph bridging pages 78 and 79. Furthermore, Bachmann et al (1994), in a comparison of in vivo and in vitro assays of T cell function teach that CTL responses readily detectable after in vitro restimulation may not be detected by any in vivo assay. Such responses lack biological relevance. "One should therefore be very cautious not to 'over-interpret' cytotoxicity found only by ^{51}Cr-release after secondary *in*

vitro restimulation; without in vivo confirmation the results may be biologically irrelevant." To further highlight the unpredictability of the art, Wan (1997) teaches that the protective immune response obtained in vivo by inoculating mice with adenovirus modified to express Pym T antigen was highly dependent on the route of administration. Wan investigated several different routes, none of which was employed in the instant working examples. Applicant, while acknowledging at page 2 of Paper No.6 that the art is unpredictable, has not provided sufficient evidence or reasoning to support the position that a protective immune response will be generated against any antigen by the claimed methods or composition.

In view of the unpredictability in the arts of gene therapy and genetic immunization, the lack of guidance regarding how to overcome the art-recognized barriers to success in gene therapy in general, and the lack of any in vivo working example of genetic immunization or gene therapy, one of skill in the art would have had to perform undue experimentation in order to use the claimed methods or composition for therapy or treatment of any disease or disorder.

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

> The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 1-19 are indefinite because it is unclear what are the metes and bounds of "a recipient in need thereof". The specification fails to provide adequate criteria for determining which recipients are in need of the claimed method of delivery.

Claims 1-19 are indefinite because they recite "the gene product" without antecedent basis.

Claim 7 is indefinite because it recites the term "efficient", which is a relative term. The term "efficient" is not defined by the claim, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, and one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention. Specifically, the parameter of "expression of encoded sequences" is rendered indefinite by the use of the term "efficient".

Claim 9 is indefinite because it is unclear whether the recited nucleic acid must comprise both adenoviral and retroviral sequences, or whether adenoviral and retroviral sequences are intended as alternatives. For the purpose of examination, the claim has been interpreted to mean that the adenoviral and retroviral sequences are intended as alternatives. If this was Applicant's intent, then it is suggested that the words "the group consisting of" should be inserted directly after the word "from".

Claims 11-14 are indefinite because it is unclear what are the metes and bounds of the terms "mucodisruptive agent" and "penetration enhancing agent". The specification fails to give either of these terms a limiting definition. It seems that any penetration enhancing agent must

disrupt the mucus membrane in order to carry out its function, so it is unclear how these terms are distinct, and how each is intended to limit the claims.

Claims 20-24 are indefinite because they recite the term "extended", which is a relative term. The term "extended" is not defined by the claim, the specification does not provide a standard for ascertaining the requisite degree, and one of ordinary skill in the art would not be reasonably apprised of the scope of the invention. Specifically, the parameter of "transgene expression" is rendered indefinite by the use of the term "extended".

Claims 20-24 are also indefinite because it allows for "simultaneous treatment" of the intestinal tract but is not clear with what the treatment of the intestinal tract should be simultaneous. The claim does not provide for the occurrence of any other activity during treatment of the intestinal tract.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

> A person shall be entitled to a patent unless --
>
> (b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.
>
> (e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

Claims 1, 3-5, 7-9, 11, 12, 20-22, and 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Wang et al (Vaccine 15(6): 621-625, 1997).

Wang teaches a method of delivering a nucleic acid to genitourinary and gastrointestinal cells in a chimpanzee. The nucleic acid is delivered intravaginally with a needless syringe, so the method of administration can be considered to be a spray. The method results in gene expression in stomach, small and large intestines, fallopian tubes, ovaries, cervix, and vagina. See table 1 on page 623. When the method was used to deliver nucleic acids including retroviral sequences encoding HIV envelope proteins, an immune response against the envelope proteins was detected. See e.g. Fig. 2 on page 624. Because gastrointestinal and genitourinary cells are covered by a mucosal lining, disruption of this lining is necessary in order for nucleic acids to enter into gastrointestinal and genitourinary cells. Because the DNA delivery composition of Wang was able to mediate DNA delivery to gastrointestinal and genitourinary cells, it is considered to comprise an agent which is adequate to disrupt the mucosal lining. In support of this position, it is noted that the genus of agents capable of disrupting the mucosal lining includes penetration enhancing agents. See claim 11. The specification fails to give a limiting definition to the term "penetration enhancing agent", thus it can reasonably be interpreted to include substances such as water, which enhance the ability of DNA to penetrate a cell by rendering the DNA easier to administer, and in which components of the mucus membrane are soluble.

Claim 5 is included in this rejection because Wang teaches delivery of nucleic acids encoding HIV Rev, which is an enzyme, and HIV gp40 and gp120, which are structural proteins.

Gp40 and gp120 could also be construed as receptors and receptor antagonists due to their interaction with $CD4^+$ T cell surface receptors.

Thus Wang anticipates the claims. It is noted that Wang does not teach any therapeutic effect, however Wang teaches all the steps of the claimed methods, so the rejection is appropriate.

Claims 20-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Henning et al (WO/93/19660, published 10/14/93), for the reasons of record in Paper Nos. 3 and 7.

Henning teaches a method for delivering biologically active genes to the intestinal epithelium wherein the genes are expressed. See entire document, especially abstract. The nucleic acids may be delivered with a mucolytic agent. See page 11, lines 25-28; and claims 61 and 62 on page 36. The nucleic acid may be comprised within a slow-release capsule. See claim 12 on page 30. The method may be repeated. See claim 37, lines 1-7 of page 33.

Thus Henning anticipates the claims.

Claims 20-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by either one of Henning et al (US Patents 5,786,340 or 5,821,235).

Henning teaches a method for delivering biologically active genes to the intestinal epithelium wherein the genes are expressed. See entire document, especially abstract. The nucleic acids may be delivered with a mucolytic agent. Claims 24 and 25 of either patent. The

nucleic acid may be comprised within a slow-release capsule. See abstract of either patent, and claims 6 and 24 of '340'. The method may be repeated. See e.g. claim 23 either patent.

Thus Henning anticipates the claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claims 1-5, 7-9, 11-13, and 19-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Henning (1993) and Wang (1997).

Henning teaches a method for delivering biologically active genes to the intestinal epithelium wherein the genes are expressed. See entire document, especially abstract. The nucleic acids may be delivered with a mucolytic agent. See page 11, lines 25-28; and claims 61 and 62 on page 36. The mucolytic agents include the alcohol dithiothreitol, the mucolytic enzyme pepsin, and N-acetyl cysteine. Proteins such as growth factors and cytokines may be included in the delivery composition. See page 11, lines 1-7. The nucleic acid may be an adenovirus or a retrovirus. See page 9, lines 11-13.

Although Henning teaches that the method may be used to induce an immune response against an antigen encoded by the nucleic acid (see page 3, lines 19-21), Henning does not teach a working example of the induction of an immune response.

Wang teaches a method of delivering a nucleic acid to genitourinary and gastrointestinal cells in a chimpanzee. The method results in gene expression in stomach, small and large intestines, fallopian tubes, ovaries, cervix, and vagina. See Table 1 on page 623. When the

method was used to deliver nucleic acids including retroviral sequences encoding HIV envelope proteins, an immune response against the envelope proteins was detected. See e.g. Fig. 2 on page 624.

Given the teachings of Wang and Henning, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use a mucolytic agent when delivering a nucleic acid construct to gastrointestinal or genitourinary cells. For example, it would have been obvious to modify the method of Wang by the introduction of a mucolytic agent in to the DNA delivery composition, as taught by Henning. One would have been motivated to do so because Henning teaches that mucus can trap delivery vectors, and that this problem can be mitigated by the use of a mucolytic agent. See page 23, lines 1-11. On the other hand, it would have been obvious to use the method of Henning to deliver an expression construct encoding the antigens of Wang. One would have been motivated to do so in order to take advantage of the effect of the mucolytic agent of Henning.

Thus the invention as a whole was prima facie obvious. It is noted that neither Wang nor Henning teach a working example of a therapeutic effect, thus the combination of enablement and obviousness rejections set forth in this action is considered to be proper.

Thus the invention as a whole was *prima facie* obvious.

Claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Henning (1993) and Wang (1997) as applied to claims 1-5, 7-9, 11-13, and 19-25 above, and further in view of Graham (WO 98/13510).

The teachings of Henning and Wang are summarized above. Briefly, Wang and Henning can be combined to render obvious methods of delivering nucleic acids to genitourinary and gastrointestinal cells, wherein a mucolytic agent is used to improve delivery. Henning teaches a variety of delivery vectors including adenoviruses. See page 9, lines 11 and 12; and claim 25 on page 31.

Wang and Henning do not teach a replication-deficient adenovirus.

Graham teaches a replication deficient adenoviral vector for deliver of expression cassettes in vivo. See abstract.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to substitute the replication deficient adenoviral vector of Graham for the vector of Henning. One would have been motivated to do so because Graham teaches that replication deficient adenoviral vectors are safer and can accommodate inserts of greater size. See e.g. page 2, lines 4-36.

Thus the invention as a whole was *prima facie* obvious.

Claims 14-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Henning (1993) and Wang (1997) as applied to claims 1-5, 7-9, 11-13, and 19-25 above, and further in view of Wallace et al (Gastroenterology 91(3): 603-611, 1986).

The teachings of Wang and Henning are summarized above. Briefly, Wang and Henning can be combined to render obvious methods of delivering nucleic acids to genitourinary and gastrointestinal cells, wherein a mucolytic agent is used to improve delivery.

Wang and Henning do not teach the use of ethanol as a mucodisruptive agent.

Wallace teaches that a solution of 50% ethanol serves as a temporary mucodisruptive agent. See abstract.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use 50% ethanol as a mucodisruptive agent in the method of Henning and Wang. One would have been motivated to do so because Wallace teaches that 50% ethanol acts as a mucodisruptive agent which is less disruptive to the underlying epithelium than N-acetyl cysteine or pepsin. Tissue on which N-acetyl cysteine or pepsin were used as mucolytic agents had significantly less intact epithelium than tissue on which 50% ethanol was used as a mucolytic agent. See abstract.

Thus the invention as a whole was *prima facie* obvious.

Claims 12 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Henning (1993) and Wang (1997) as applied to claims 1-5, 7-9, 11-13, and 19-25 above, and further in view of Grinstaff (US Patent 5,639,473, issued 7/17/97).

The teachings of Wang and Henning are summarized above. Briefly, Wang and Henning can be combined to render obvious methods of delivering nucleic acids to genitourinary and gastrointestinal cells, wherein a mucolytic agent is used to improve delivery. Henning teaches that nucleic acids can be delivered via rectal endoscopy. See paragraph bridging pages 24 and 25.

Henning and Wang do not teach a suppository.

Grinstaff teaches a method of rectal nucleic acid delivery through the use of a suppository comprising a nucleic acid. See claim 26.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use the suppository of Grinstaff in the method of Wang and Henning. One would have been motivated to do so because a suppository is less invasive than the endoscopy taught by Henning.

Thus the invention as a whole was *prima facie* obvious.

Conclusion

No claim is allowed. Claims 6 and 27-29 are free of the art of record.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner(s) should be directed to Richard Schnizer, whose telephone number is 703-306-5441. The examiner can normally be reached Monday through Friday between the hours of 6:20 AM and 3:50 PM. The examiner is off on alternate Fridays, but is sometimes in the office anyway.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Leguyader, can be reached at 703-308-0447. The FAX numbers for art unit

1632 are 703-308-4242, and 703-305-3014. Additionally correspondence can be transmitted to the following RIGHTFAX numbers: 703-872-9306 for correspondence before final rejection, and 703-872-9307 for correspondence after final rejection.

Inquiries of a general nature or relating to the status of the application should be directed to the Patent Analyst Trina Turner whose telephone number is 703-305-3413.

Richard Schnizer, Ph.D.